1:Marshall E-5 (1952-1953) 1959 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung



various ways. The affine who marries into the band, as long as he lives with the band, has a right to the water, to the hunting, and to the gathering of the wild foods, as members born to the band have.

I think that primarily the values and assets that parents seek in choosing mates for their children have to do with the kind of security which is attained through human responses and relations. Friends may want their children to marry because they know and trust each other. Or a family may want to increase its kinship bonds—and thereby its security—with certain bands for any number of reasons—among them could be food, water, or a desire to have supportihg friends in a certain area—and, like the crowned heads of Europe, the /Kung may deliberately seek to establish alliances through marriages.

Merging with such desires and to be balanced with them are the characteristics of the families concerned. The /Kung want their boys and girls to marry into up-standing families, among people who are ' able to feed themselves ', who are ' not lazy and not thin '. They do not want ' far-hearted ' in-laws who are not generous in food-sharing and gift-giving. /U, ≠Toma's wife, said she would take particular note of their generosity in giving bead ornaments to their children. She would not want a daughter of hers to marry among people who were stingy in that. Proper observance of the avoidances and other social regulations is an asset in in-laws, for they can then be assumed to have taught their children how to behave properly.

The individual's characteristics are also a concern. Parents of boys hope the girls to whom their sons are engaged will grow up to be good-looking, because, they say, a man takes pride in a beautiful wife. Xama, the mother of Gao, the headman of Band 2, said she had wanted for her son a light-skinned girl with good teeth who was not too thin and not too tall. But most important of all is a sweet temper, she said. A mother hopes, she said, that the girl will not be lazy or wander about visiting at night at other people's fires ' like a bitch '. The girl should observe the avoidances and the menstruation and other taboos, and in every way behave as a well brought up girl should. However, since the girls are engaged when they are very young, I suppose the parents of the boys can only watch them grow and hope.

Girls would not want a man ' as tall as a giraffe ', we were told. They would seek a smaller husband. /U's first husband, from whom she was divorced, is so tall (almost six feet) that people laugh and say, ' Did his mother have a dream with a *//gaus* (a spirit)? '

The girls themselves, all twitters and giggles, told me what they admire in the boys. They like a good hunter like /Gunda; and they like handsome teeth and a wide smile like young Tsamgao's; and straight, slender legs like //Ao's; and a fluid, swift walk like /Gao's; and they hate a big black belly like Gao's—the middle-aged medicine man in a band distant from Gautscha, to whom the young /Doin was married.

The parents of a girl want the boy to be responsible, kind to their daughter and, above all, a good provider—which means a good hunter. They want him to make his arrows straight, to shoot swiftly and accurately, to be able to run down an eland, and, most of all, they want a son-in-law whose heart says to him, ' Why am I sitting lazily here in the werf? Why do I not get up and go hunting? ' and who, in obedience to his heart, and the group's desire, and the magic which has been rubbed into his scarifications in the Ceremony of the First Killing, gets up and goes.

[21 cont.]

648 The Bushmen as a whole are despised by the other peoples, but in individual cases they are feared, and not least by the Whites. The Bushmen are familiar with this attitude and conduct themselves accordingly.

797 177 The Bushmen accept a foreign point of view only with great difficulty, if at all. The mission, accordingly, can show no noteworthy success among them. On the other hand, they 157 usually grasp the intentions of others more quickly than the ordinarily more superficial Blacks. Consequently, they give brief and precise answers to the questions put to them. When asked questions that they do not want to answer, they remain silent. At the same time, in dealings with them one should note that they tire very quickly when they have to do mental work, and then they will not answer further questions, not because they do not want to, but because they are too tired.

181 The Bushmen are not generous. Nevertheless, allow- [574] ing a stranger to partake of a meal, as well as giving him some 609 of the available water, is wholly matter-of-course with them. [431] They very rarely, however, give any of their personal belongings, weapons, ornaments, hides, and so forth, as presents. If they themselves receive presents, they are obviously delighted. 181 It is true that they do not express their gratitude with words, ● 577 [22] but anyone who does the Bushmen a kindness may be sure that they will manifest their gratitude by deeds to the point of self-sacrifice.

To help a fellow human being who is in trouble is a moral obligation. There is a report of a prospector who lost his [648] way in the bush forest and was then saved by the Bushmen, with whom he could not even converse; they took care of him for several days and finally put him on the right path.

Agreements and promises are kept unconditionally by the Bushman, although it is true that he usually arrives a little too late. Once, when an ox from the ox-cart of the Catholic mission had to be left behind on the way to the Okovanggo, it was put in the care of the Bushmen and they were to deliver it at the time of the next full moon. The people kept their word, and the ox was delivered, well-fed, at the specified time.

As a comrade, the Bushman is reliable and faithful (1).

181 648 1. A European had once illegally

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
GiKwe



481 well as great loads of melons, all of which we offered again
482 and again to carry for them, but because, they said, they might want to stop for the night or just refresh themselves along the way, they would not part with their bundles.

The place we went to was called Ai a ha'o; it was the pan where we had seen the lion. It took us almost all day to drive there, and shortly after we arrived Dasina and Kutera joined us, having traveled almost as fast as we. Those two old women must have walked at four or five miles an hour all the way, over veld so rough that the trucks couldn't go much faster.

342 Before dark, the Bushman women had built a werf, a clear-
361 ing of grass for each family with a shallow pit to sleep in and a place for the fire, all four clearings under the branches of a
353 single tree which would give them shade in the daytime. On the branches each person hung whatever there was to hang, quivers, skin bags, or aprons, and these things swung in the cold wind. The women gathered firewood and lit their fires,
757 and Dasina asked Twikwe to stand on her stomach because
562 she was tired from her long walk and wanted a massage. Before they went to sleep the men and the three young boys
574 walked to our camp, about fifty feet away, to say good-night,
577 but the women stayed at home because at night all Bushmen women stay at home. A woman does not even leave her fire to go to her neighbor's fire three feet away because people will say that she doesn't like to stay home; she speaks loudly to
[181] her neighbor instead. Bushmen are a rather conservative people, and they are very moral in that they keep their own rules.

574 The smoke in the west that Gai had seen when he roasted the tortoise intrigued him very much. Again and again he said that it was people's smoke, and one morning he said he wanted to go over to it, to look for the man who was Wita-

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung



sometimes he would abandon his gravity and laugh a high, reaching laugh that one could hear from far away, a laugh that came from his very soul, or, as Bushmen say, from his stomach. He listened diplomatically and intently whenever he was spoken to, staring at the gound, and had a habit of echoing, in a loud falsetto voice, the important phrases of every sentence he was told.

"We went to Keitsa Pan," someone might say to him.

"To Keitsa," Toma would reply.

". . . and we slept there, but the blind flies were very bad . . ."

"Oh, bad, bad . . ."

". . . but in the morning we saw two porcupines . . ."

". . . yes, porcupines . . ."

". . . and we killed them there. We made them cry . . ."

". . . made them cry . . ."

". . . made them cry."

Toma was considered to be very fortunate in his marriage. Of course it was through his wife, Tu, that he gained the leadership of the Gautscha people, his life free in the veld rather than in serfdom, and his two young sons, but besides all this his wife was beautiful, having a smooth face and great, clear eyes like a cat. Also, she was five feet tall, considered to be a very desirable height, and although no Bushman has ever been too fat, Tu was not too thin and her arms and legs were round. She had soft blue scars curving on her forehead which made her eyes seem to lift at the corners, and blue scars on her thighs that showed when she walked. Her chief virtues, in the eyes of Bushmen, were that she decorated herself with ornaments in her hair and kept her hands and face washed, thus demonstrating that she cared what she looked like, rather than letting herself go now that she was married. To show that she observed propriety, cared what

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung



people thought of her, she didn't leave her fire at night to go visiting, even to the scherm right next to hers. Rather, if she had something to say, she would shout it across the werf.

Her deference to appearances and public opinion seemed to make up for her faults, for she was considered to be almost a model personality in spite of her extremely jealous and vindictive moods which caused her to accuse others, quite unreasonably, of selfishness, greed, and other such things. Her husband and sons were not excepted, but this was something that Toma had learned to ignore. He would simply shrug his shoulders if she railed at him, pretend he didn't hear if she railed at others.

When she didn't assault her family with her tongue she sometimes harmed them actively. Very often she would lie sullen with narrowed eyes in front of her scherm watching the other women walk out to the veld in the morning on their way to dig veld food, and on these days her husband and sons would eat nothing unless, driven by hunger, they went to the veld themselves, the three of them together, to dig up a few roots and eat them raw. Tu herself did not experience hunger as a result of these moods, for she would have saved herself a morsel from the day before. It was her right to do this: among Bushmen every root is owned by its digger and is shared only at its owner's wish.

Toma might ask but would never command Tu to feed her family, for as he had learned to ignore her biting tongue he had learned to accept her moods. This was his way, appeasing her, and because Toma wanted peace perhaps as much as he wanted Tu, he pampered her.

This was not always so. One day gossiping people told us that early in their marriage Toma shot a fat kudu and Tu said: "Don't cook all the meat because my mother will be coming to visit us."

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung



felt uneasy with no specific worry in mind. He did ask them 787
one specific question, though; he wanted to know where an outbreak of diarrhea that everyone had got came from, and when Tu's brother, the lame boy, who was watching, heard what was asked, he said that our cameras had sent the diarrhea, and the people almost choked themselves laughing at that. Toma laughed until he cried. "We do not really believe this," he said through his tears, looking over his shoulder at us lest we should be uneasy, "we are only joking."

Toma, Gao Feet, and Lazy Kwi took turns throwing the discs and presently the discs told them that the diarrhea "came from the fires, from people to the east." I don't know how to interpret this, but perhaps the Bushmen meant that the disease blew down the wind. The discs also foretold that someone in the west would kill a buck, that visitors were coming, and that some Europeans and some Bushmen would sit at a fire to talk. Later all these things came true. Because the oracle discs predict conservatively, their predictions often come true.

Toma lost interest in them and told everybody how he had 521
been walking home the evening before and had heard a voice which had sounded to him like the voice of a European speaking English, but when he had investigated he had found a Bushman man sitting alone in a clump of bushes practicing the sounds of English, possibly hoping to speak it, and Toma's audience all thought that was very funny and they talked on and on about it. Incidents like this are talked about forever by Bushmen, who drag them out infinitely, remembering every detail, savoring them to the fullest. This is because very little happens outside of routine. (We once asked [538 577]
some Bushmen if they ever made up stories to tell and they, a little righteously, said no, they did not, because Bushmen do not care to hear about things that are not true.) Then the

12: Marshall E-5 (1951-1959) 1961 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung



Incidentally, we were not included by the /Kung in their gift-giving patterns. They gave us a few things spontaneously which they thought we would enjoy—python meat, for instance—but did not feel obligated to reciprocate for every gift we gave them.

Asking for an original gift or asking that a return gift be made after due time has elapsed is within the rules of propriety. People prefer that others give in return without their asking, but ≠Toma says he does not hesitate to ask if a gift is long overdue. If a person wants a particular object he may ask for it. Asking is also a means by which people play upon each other's feelings. One can test a friendship in this way. One can give vent to jealousy or satisfy it by acquiring some object or making someone else uncomfortable. I thought that /Ti/kay (an intelligent man, but very touchy, uncooperative, and turned inward upon himself) used to ask for gifts to play with anger, arousing it for the sake of feeling it, as children do with fear, playing witches in the dark. His remarks one day indicated a mingling of feelings and purposes. He told us that one may ask for anything. He does, he said. He goes to a person's fire and sits and asks. (I could imagine him with his black glancing eyes sitting and asking!) He asks usually for only one or two things, but if a person has a lot he may ask for more. He said he is almost never refused but that if a man had only one pot and /Ti/kay asked for it the man might say, 'I am not refusing, but it is the only pot I have. If I get another you may come for this one. I am very sorry but this is the only pot I have.' /Ti/kay said this would not make him angry unless he were refused too many times. To be refused too many times makes a person very angry. But, said /Ti/kay, he himself did not tire of people asking him for gifts. Asking, he claimed, 'formed a love' between people. It means 'he still loves me, that is why he is asking.' At least it forms a something between people, I thought.

I have stressed the mitigation of jealousy as the important value of gift-giving. /Kung informants stressed more the value of putting people under the obligation of expressing friendship by making the friendly gesture, even if it is only a token gesture. Demi said, 'The worst thing is not giving presents. If people do not like each other but one gives a gift and the other must accept, this brings a peace between them. We give to one another always. We give what we have. This is the way we live together.'

### Absence of Stealing

One day, when I wanted to talk with a group of informants about what the /Kung considered to be wrong-doing, I began with /Ti/kay. He said promptly, 'Making crooked arrows and fighting', but could not think of anything else. Informants had previously said that not sharing food would be the worst thing they could think of. Others had mentioned that the breaking of the incest and menstruation taboos would be very wrong and that girls should not sit in immodest posture. No one seemed to think lying was very serious wrong-doing, and no one mentioned stealing. I finally asked directly and Gao Medicine said they had not thought to mention stealing because they did not steal.

We had heard of the episode of the man taking honey from a tree, honey which had been found and marked and was therefore owned by someone else, and being killed for it by the owner. That was the only episode of stealing that we discovered.

12: Marshall E-5 (1951-1959) 1961 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung



The /Kung stole nothing from us. Even when we went away on trips, leaving several bands of /Kung settled around our camp site, we left our supplies and equipment unlocked in the open or in our tents with confidence that nothing would be stolen. Things that we lost or forgot in the werf were returned to us, even two cigarettes in a crumpled package.

Stealing without being discovered is practically impossible in /Kung life because the /Kung know everybody's footprints and every object. Respect for ownership is strong. But, apart from that, /Ti/kay said, 'Stealing would cause nothing but trouble. It might cause fighting.'

### Conclusion

During seventeen and a half months when I lived with the Nyae Nyae /Kung at Gautscha (with Bands 1 and 2 and many visitors—usually about sixty to seventy-five persons), I personally saw four flare-ups of discord and heard of three others which occurred in neighbouring bands during that period. All were resolved before they became serious quarrels. Of the seven, four were flare-ups of sexual jealousy. One was 'the talk' about Khuan//a's gift. Two were very minor disagreements about going somewhere, when Gao Beard's frustrated young wife hit him on the head with her digging-stick and when /Ti/kay gave his brother a shove for refusing to accompany him. None were about food. We considered, judging from that sample, that the /Kung managed very well to keep tensions from turning into hostility, to avoid arousing jealousy and ill will, to cohere, and to achieve the comfort and security which they so desire in human relations.

## APPENDIX

### *!Kung Bushman Artifacts*

### ANIMAL MATERIALS

#### Hides

*Made and used by men*

- breech clouts
- oracle disks
- head-dresses (a few, worn in dances)
- caps (a few)

*Made by men, used by women*

- genital aprons
- small karosses worn around buttocks or for carrying babies

*Made by men, used by all*

- karosses
- bags (sewn)
- bags of whole skins
- tobacco pouches of scrota
- bracelets, armbands, knee and ankle bands
- necklaces
- thongs

#### Cocoons

*Made by men*

- dance rattles

#### Bone

*Made and used by men*

- connecting parts for arrow-shafts
- arrow-points (few)
- dishes for mixing poison

*Made and used by women*

- fresh bone, pounded to powder, is used to clean and soften karosses

#### Birds' Nests

*Used by men and women*

- tobacco pouches (nests of the penduline tit, *Anthoscopus minutus*)

13: Marshall E-5 (1952-1955) 1962 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung



and the water-holes. He made the moon and the stars, all at the same time. Then he made the wind. He is the creator of all these things and he commands their movements.

He created the things that grow from the ground and he created animals and painted their stripes and markings on them and gave them their names. Then he created human beings. He created animals as animals and human beings as human beings. He commanded them to breathe. Without breath they would not live. 'First was woman and then man. The man asked the woman to give him fire. She did. The woman got some veldkos and was eating it. Then the man married the woman. This was one man's cryptic account of the creation. Something about the creation of fire seems to have been left out. ≠*Gao!na* named the first woman Khwova for his wife and he named the first man ≠Gao for himself.

From the beginning he created men and women to be mortal. He turns the spirits of the dead into *//ganwasi* and commands them to live in the sky with him and be his servants. He orders them to go down to earth, to mortals, to carry sickness or death to them, or he may order them to carry good fortune.

≠*Gao!na* has a medicine with which he can renew himself at any time. He also renews all the beings who live in the sky with him. They get old and he renews them. They do not die. But he has not given human beings that medicine and the /Kung said, 'We cannot make it.' (They pointed out that in this quality the medicine is like water. They cannot create water. 'We know how to dig and make the holes but we cannot create the water,' they said.)

≠*Gao!na* gave arrows and bows and assegais to human beings and he gave digging-sticks. He gave people the knowledge to make all the things which they now make and taught them to do all they know how to do. 'If he did not want us to know he would not have taught us.' He commanded human beings to dig for food with their sticks and to hunt with their weapons. From the beginning they did these things.

≠*Gao!na* created all the medicines. (The /Kung word for both material substances used as medicines and magic or spiritual medicine is *n!um*.) He created the medicine which is in the medicine songs to cure the people and he created all the other medicines. He put medicine power in the medicine men (*n!um kxau* is medicine man, owner of medicine), and he calls that power *gaoxa*, the same respect word which people may use for him when they fear to say his name.

≠*Gao!na* commanded men and women to marry and live together and have children. He controls the actions of people. If they do good deeds or bad deeds it has been under his control. He arranges all things.

Several times in our talks I asked if the great creator controlled the lives of Bushmen only, or if he controlled all the people on earth. It was not surprising that the /Kung's thinking on this point was vague and contradictory. Some said, 'He is over all people. He can kill anybody.' (They had said this same thing about *Ko*.) Others claimed that ≠*Gao!na* and *//Ganwa* as well were 'only for Bushmen'. White people and black people, they said, have their own gods.

### ≠Gao!na's *Appearance and Dwelling Place*

The /Gikwe Bushmen in the Bechuanaland Protectorate visualize the protagonist of their old tales, *Pisiboro*, as being of supernatural size. In the tortures of his death